

# SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

106th Congress  
1st Session

Vote No. 67

March 25, 1999, 5:18 p.m.  
Page S-3382 Temp. Record

## HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY CUBA/Passage

**SUBJECT:** A resolution urging the United States to seek passage of a United Nations resolution criticizing Cuba for its human rights abuses. . . S.Res. 57. Passage.

### ACTION: RESOLUTION AGREED TO, 98-0

**SYNOPSIS:** S.Res. 57, a resolution urging the United States to seek passage of a United Nations resolution criticizing Cuba for its human rights abuses, and securing the appointment of a Special Rapporteur for Cuba, will express the sense of the Senate "that at the 55th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Switzerland, the United States should make all efforts necessary to pass a resolution, including introducing such a resolution, criticizing Cuba for its human rights abuses in Cuba, and to secure the appointment of a Special Rapporteur for Cuba." The resolution will make the following findings:

- the annual meeting of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland, will provide a forum for discussing human rights and expressing international support for improved human rights performance;
- according to the United States Department of State and international human rights organizations, the Government of Cuba continues to commit widespread and well documented human rights abuses in Cuba;
- such abuses stem from a complete intolerance of dissent and the totalitarian nature of the regime controlled by Fidel Castro;
- such abuses violate internationally accepted norms of conduct;
- the Government of Cuba routinely restricts workers' rights, including the right to form independent unions, and employs forced labor, including that by children;
- Cuba is bound by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- the Government of Cuba has detained scores of citizens for advocating human rights, free and fair elections, and freedom of the press;
- the Government of Cuba has recently escalated efforts to extinguish expressions of protest or criticism by passing measures criminalizing peaceful, pro-democratic activities and independent journalism;

(See other side)

YEAS (98)				NAYS (0)		NOT VOTING (2)	
Republican (53 or 100%)		Democrats (45 or 100%)		Republicans (0 or 0%)	Democrats (0 or 0%)	Republicans (2)	Democrats (0)
Abraham	Helms	Akaka	Kennedy			Lugar <sup>-4</sup>	
Allard	Hutchinson	Baucus	Kerrey			McCain <sup>-2</sup>	
Ashcroft	Hutchison	Bayh	Kerry				
Bennett	Inhofe	Biden	Kohl				
Bond	Jeffords	Bingaman	Landrieu				
Brownback	Kyl	Boxer	Lautenberg				
Bunning	Lott	Breaux	Leahy				
Burns	Mack	Bryan	Levin				
Campbell	McConnell	Byrd	Lieberman				
Chafee	Murkowski	Cleland	Lincoln				
Cochran	Nickles	Conrad	Mikulski				
Collins	Roberts	Daschle	Moynihan				
Coverdell	Roth	Dodd	Murray				
Craig	Santorum	Dorgan	Reed				
Crapo	Sessions	Durbin	Reid				
DeWine	Shelby	Edwards	Robb				
Domenici	Smith, Bob	Feingold	Rockefeller				
Enzi	Smith, Gordon	Feinstein	Sarbanes				
Fitzgerald	Snowe	Graham	Schumer				
Frist	Specter	Harkin	Torricelli				
Gorton	Stevens	Hollings	Wellstone				
Gramm	Thomas	Inouye	Wyden				
Grams	Thompson	Johnson					
Grassley	Thurmond						
Gregg	Voinovich						
Hagel	Warner						
Hatch							

#### EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

#### SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

Compiled and written by the staff of the Republican Policy Committee—Larry E. Craig, Chairman

- the recent conviction of peaceful dissidents Vladimiro Rica, Marta Beatriz Roque, Felix Bonne, and Rene Gomez Manzano for publishing a proposal for democratic reform is indicative of the increased efforts by the Government of Cuba to detain citizens and extinguish expressions of support for the accused; and
- these efforts underscore that the Government of Cuba has relentlessly continued its longstanding pattern of human rights abuses and systematic denial of universally recognized human rights.

**Those favoring** passage contended:

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights will soon meet. When it does, the United States should introduce and support a resolution criticizing Cuba for its despicable human rights abuses. Those abuses include restrictions on workers' rights (including the right to form independent unions), forced labor, and the detention, arrest, and defamation of Cubans who support human rights and democratic reforms. Cuba has the only nondemocratic government in our hemisphere, and that government's level of repression and complete disregard for international norms cannot be ignored.

Last year, for the first time in many years, the United Nations Human Rights Commission did not pass a resolution condemning human rights abuses in Cuba. This change may have been due to optimism that Cuba would institute reforms as a result of the Pope's visit in January of 1998. During that visit, Cuba's communist dictator Castro promised the Pope that he would make reforms. Not surprisingly, it has turned out that Castro was lying. The independent group Human Rights Watch noted that at the end of 1998, Cuba's "stepped up persecutions and harassments of dissidents, along with its refusal to grant amnesty to hundreds of remaining political prisoners or to reform its criminal code, marked a disheartening return to heavy-handed repression." Since the Pope's visit, Castro has arrested more dissidents than he has released, has instituted new laws which restrict the freedom of speech, has arrested 15 people for trying to celebrate Martin Luther King's birthday, and, most recently, has arrested and sentenced four prominent activists (with terms ranging from 3.5 years to 5 years) just for making a statement about democracy.

This resolution will have four substantive effects. First, it will call upon the Clinton Administration to use its voice and its vote at the upcoming meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission to support a strong resolution that will condemn Castro's systematic repression. Second, it will call for the appointment of a special rapporteur to document the Cuban regime's willful violations of universally recognized human rights. Third, it will send a strong message to the Cuban people that they have the support of the United States. Fourth, it will show that Senators are united in their condemnation of human rights abuses in Cuba. We strongly urge our colleagues to support this resolution.

**While favoring** passage, some Senators expressed the following reservations:

We support this resolution but we fear that it will be counter-productive. Criticizing Cuba may stir nationalist sentiments and thus help Castro perpetuate his rule. We realize that many of our colleagues are upset by recent events in Cuba, but we still think that it would be better to maintain a steady, consistent policy of engagement that emphasized areas of common interest between Cubans and Americans, such as baseball or music. If we engaged Cuba, and increased contacts, we would be more successful in fostering democratic and human rights reforms. Still, it is true that Castro has been increasing repression in Cuba, so we will support passage of this resolution.

**No arguments were expressed in opposition to passage.**